

Historic, Archive Document

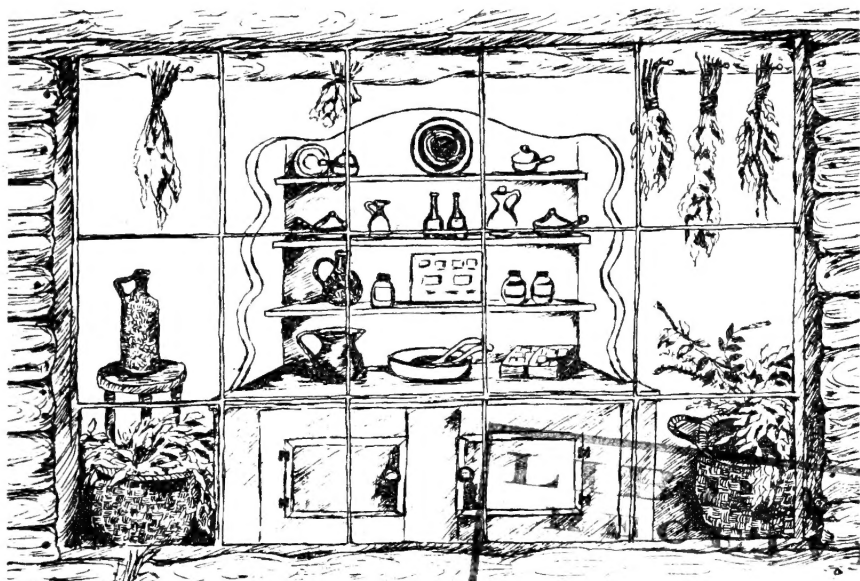
Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

2.13

1949

Ac

Herb Grower's Handbook



The Fosters

Publishers of

The Herb Grower Magazine

Laurel Hill Herb Farm

Falls Village,

Connecticut

25 Cents



What are Herbs?

Properly speaking, an herb is a plant which dies down to the ground each year; i.e. an annual or herbaceous perennial without woody stems or evergreen leaves. By common acceptance, the word herb has come to mean any botanical specimen which has been used for food, flavor, perfume, cosmetic or medicine.

Thus many of the herbs are evergreen in nature, some actually being trees and shrubs such as *Laurus nobilis* which provides our Bay leaves. It would also appear that almost all cultivated plants belong in this category, for even the garden flowers probably were grown first for food, flavoring or medicine.

There are more than 100 different kinds of herbs which may be grown in the temperate zone as garden subjects. Of these, the fifty-odd which contain flavor-bearing essential oils in their roots, leaves, flowers or seeds, may be divided in the following four groups. Most of the varieties in each group may be grown from seed as easily as any flowers or vegetable. All of them are plants with a purpose that more than justifies their decorative presence in the home garden.

Among the annual and perennial plants of an aromatic nature, several will be found which could be added to the flower garden, the vegetable patch, a rockery or a terrace planting. However, a garden of herbs combines the pleasures of beauty to look upon, fragrance to enjoy and flavors to enhance other foods, better than any other type of planting.

Annual Flavoring Plants

Common name	Botanical name	family
Sweet Basil	- <i>Ocimum basilicum</i>	(Mint)

The glossy, oval, green leaves of Sweet Basil resemble those of a pepper plant. The sweet, spicy flavor is well suited to tomato dishes and salads. Basil is a hot weather plant, to be sown or set out only after the ground is thoroughly warm. The first leaves may be cut for flavoring when the plants are six inches tall but the main crop of leafy tips is ready for drying in late July when the 2½ foot tall, branching plants are in bud. The small white flowers are not conspicuous but cut well for aroma in flower arrangements. Tender Sweet Basil thrives in hot, humid weather but needs a sunny location. Cut all the plants within a few inches of the ground before the first frost and hang up in bunches until the leaves are crisp enough to strip off by rubbing lightly over a coarse screen.

Bush Basil - *Ocimum minimum* (Mint)

A dwarf, much bushier form of Basil with tiny roundly ovate leaves in dense clusters. It has the same inimitable taste and nature as Sweet Basil but looks far more attractive in the garden because of its mounded, box-like habit of growth. The neat look of the foot high, rounded miniature plants makes them especially favored for edgings. Sow seed in full sun after the ground is thoroughly warm, thin or transplant to stand ten inches apart.

Purple Basil-*O. basilicum* var. *purpureum* (Mint)

Deep purple leaves and pink flowers are of unusual beauty in the garden and bouquets. The scent and flavor are a little different, and more tea-like, from Sweet Basil. Give the same care as Sweet Basil. If plants do not receive enough sun, the leaves become mottled with green. 2½ feet tall.

Lemon Basil - *Ocimum sp.*

(Mint)

Lighter green color and narrower, oval leaves more widely spaced on the two foot tall stems distinguish Lemon Basil from Sweet Basil. The distinct lemon scent and flavor of the leaves marks them for use in salads, tomato and vegetable dishes. Sow seed in full sun. Never let the ground dry out until germination is completed. Cover lightly with fine soil but tamp down well. A gelatinous coating covers the seed as soon as they become moist. This makes them float about easily if watered heavily from above. Allow six inches between mature plants. Does not transplant as easily as the other Basils.

Borage - *Borago officinalis*

(Borage)

Star-shaped blue and pink blossoms are more cherished than the hairy, succulent leaves. They are lovely in flower arrangements, long blooming in the garden and can be candied for decorating beverages and fruit cups. Sow seed where plants are to remain. In good soil, seedlings should be thinned to stand ten inches apart to attain their full height of three feet. The fat black seeds form rapidly and drop out to self-sow providing a second crop the same or the following season. Borage is one of the quickest and most satisfactory annuals to grow from seed. Plant in full sun as soon as the ground can be worked or broadcast the seed in the fall.

Chervil - *Anthriscus cerefolium*

(Parsley)

Thin, much-cut leaves in lacy pattern. Flowers white of secondary importance to the liquorice-flavored foliage which is used like French Tarragon, in salads, Fines Herbes. Needs shade during hot, dry weather. Plant early in spring, when seed is ripe in August or in fall. Scatter seeds on moist soil well mixed with compost, firm in but do not cover. Let some plants self-sow for constant supply of leaves. 2 ft. partial shade north exposure preferable.

Garden Cress - *Lepidium sativum* (Mustard)

Spicy little 'pepper grass' grows quickly from seed sown where plants are to remain. Piquant flavor peps up salads, crisped leaves are a pleasing garnish. Sow successively in sun or part shade. Cut or thin for eating when four to six inches high, about six weeks.

Corn Salad - *Valerianella olitoria* (Valerian)

Makes flat rosettes of spatulate leaves for salads. Plant as early in spring as ground can be worked, in fall for late season crop. Slow growing but remains tender far into winter. Known as 'Mache' or 'Feld Salat'. Sun or partial shade, good soil.

Dill - *Anethum graveolens* (Parsley)

Sour-sweet flavor of the thread-like leaves is as tasty in salads, potatoes, as seeds. Three-foot plants are cut when yellow umbels begin to ripen seeds for pickling. Sow thickly in full sun. Pull thinnings for cooking.

Fennel - *Foeniculum vulgare* (Parsley)

Looks like Dill, but yellower green, anise-tasting leaves, heavier umbels of yellow flowers on five-foot stalks. Used in sauces, fish. Bulbous stems of variety *Dulce* eaten like celery. Plant in warm sunny ground.

Sweet Marjoram - *Majorana hortensis* (Mint)

A tender perennial treated as an annual. Sow fine seeds under glass in sterile medium over soil. Transplant once before setting in garden. Late sowing can be made in the garden in very shallow drills but germination is likely to be spotty through damping off or washing out. Will stand frost but pull up plants, cutting off roots, dry on screens before ground freezes. Needs full sun, sandy soil. Soft round leaves and knotted flower heads of rich, aroma and flavor. Use with eggs

Parsley - *Petroselinum crispum* (Parsley)

Curly Parsley is more decorative for garden and table than the Flat-leaved variety but the latter has more flavor and vitamins. One tablespoon chopped Parsley is equal to the juice of one orange in Vitamin C; high in Vitamin A. Sow seeds of biennial Parsley every spring. Second year plants bolt to seed at once. Takes 3 to 4 weeks to germinate. Soaking seed in warm water or planting in a flat under glass and setting out in the garden later hastens it somewhat. Will tolerate shade, likes good garden loam.

American Pennyroyal - *Hedeoma pulegioides* (Mint)

Intensely aromatic annual of familiar scent which is disliked by ants and mosquitoes. Plants become bushier and more full-flowered when cultivated. Leaves are used sparingly for seasoning lamb and pork, full sun or part shade. 1 ft.

Summer Savory - *Satureja hortensis* (Mint)

Narrow leaves, branching stems and tiny pink flowers on 18-inch plants which turn a handsome purple in late summer. Light but spicy flavor called 'bohenkraut' for its affinity for beans. Sow where plants are to remain. Thin carefully leaving plants close enough to support each other. Hill up slightly when weeding. Cut tips for drying several times. Full sun. lean soil.



Perennial Flavoring Plants

Angelica - *Angelica Archangelica* (Parsley)

Stately biennial, which, if not allowed to flower, remains perennial. Stems and leaves have a cooling, aromatic quality which makes them valued for flavoring. Candied stems and syrup used for desserts, frostings and confectionery. Sow seed in moist humus in shade

where plants may reach three feet across and five in height the third year if allowed to flower and seed. Ripe seeds often produce many volunteers around old plants. Sow in spring, when ripe in August or fall.

Lemon Balm - *Melissa officinalis* (Mint)

Heart-shaped, light green, lemon-scented leaves used like Mint. Sow seeds early, shade until plants are well started. Set out two feet apart. Will tolerate shade or thrive in full sun in good soil. 2½ ft. tall.

Salad Burnet - *Sanguisorba minor* (Rose)

Picoted-edged compound leaves in rosettes catch the dew and remain evergreen. Distinct cucumber flavor agreeable in salads. Sow seed early in spring and thin or transplant to 1 ft. apart. Thrives in sun or partial shade in poorest soil. Will die out if soil is rich or poorly drained. Cut off flower stalks for neatness.

Chives - *Allium schoenoprasum* (Onion)

Hardy perennial source of delicate onion flavor from the tubular leaves. Let the showy purple blossoms go until ready to seed on some plants for their bright lavender color. Keep a few clumps just for cutting. Divide every 3rd year. Sun 18 in.

Leek - *Allium porrum* (Onion)

Seed in rich soil in spring or fall. Transplant once before hilling up. Bulbous stalks make tasty soup and vegetable. 2 - 3 ft., sun.

Lovage - *Levisticum officinale* (Parsley)

A hardy perennial with leaves and stalks of a more delicious flavor than celery. Attractive, much-cut leaves but flower stalks 5 feet tall with sparse yellow umbels. Cut leaves to dry before buds open. Pick green all season. Likes moist humus, part shade.

Rosemary - *Rosmarinus officinalis* (Mint)

Aromatic needle-like leaves, blue flowers. Tender perennial difficult to start from seed. Sow in flats or coldframe. Transplant to a 2 in. pot as soon as first true leaves develop. Bring indoors for winter. Choice seasoning for soup and meats.

Sage - *Salvia officinalis* (Mint)

Hardy perennial with almost evergreen, pebbled grey leaves, blue flowers in May. Sow seeds in early spring. Allow 2 ft. between plants. Old plants become woody unless pruned to leave two branches after flowering. Full sun, 2½ ft.

Skirret - *Sium sisarum* (Parsley)

Erect, three-foot perennial with shiny, compound toothed leaves. Roots may be eaten like parsnips. White flowers in loose umbels, decorative in August. Sun or partial shade, good soil.

French Sorrel - *Rumex scutatus* (Dock)

Tender, spear-shaped leaves of sweetly acid taste, delectable in cream soup or cooked with spinach. Sow seeds in early spring. Thin to one foot apart. Cut off panicles of brownish flowers during second year to encourage new foliage for cutting for greens. 3 ft. in bloom, tolerates shade, acid soil.

Thyme - *Thymus vulgaris* (Mint)

Erect, shrubby perennial with tiny leaves of great pungence. French Thyme greyer than English Thyme with decurved leaves but not so hardy. Give full sun, drainage and sandy soil. Sow fine seeds in flats or special seed bed. Set out 6 in. apart. Six inch plants covered with mauve blossoms in June.

Other perennial herbs which are much desired for salads and cooking are French Tarragon and Mint. These do not set good seed so must be started from roots.

Reprinted from The Herb Grower Magazine

Making The Herb Garden

Site & Soil

The most important considerations in choosing a site for the herb garden are the amount of sun available and the drainage of the land. The sunniest part of the yard should be given over to it because the majority of aromatic plants need full sun to develop the maximum of flavor bearing essential oils. There are some fragrant and culinary herbs which will tolerate shade and others that need it for protection of their soft foliage. Therefore, the ideal herb garden might have a southern exposure with one end receiving the broken shade cast by tall trees in the rear of the garden proper.

A sloping terrain with sandy or gravelly soil which can be terraced with beds is more suited to the growing of pungent plants than flowers. Where the ground is level or not too well-drained it is advantageous to make raised beds, with boundaries of iron, curved to fit the design, or weathered boards if the plots are square or rectangular.

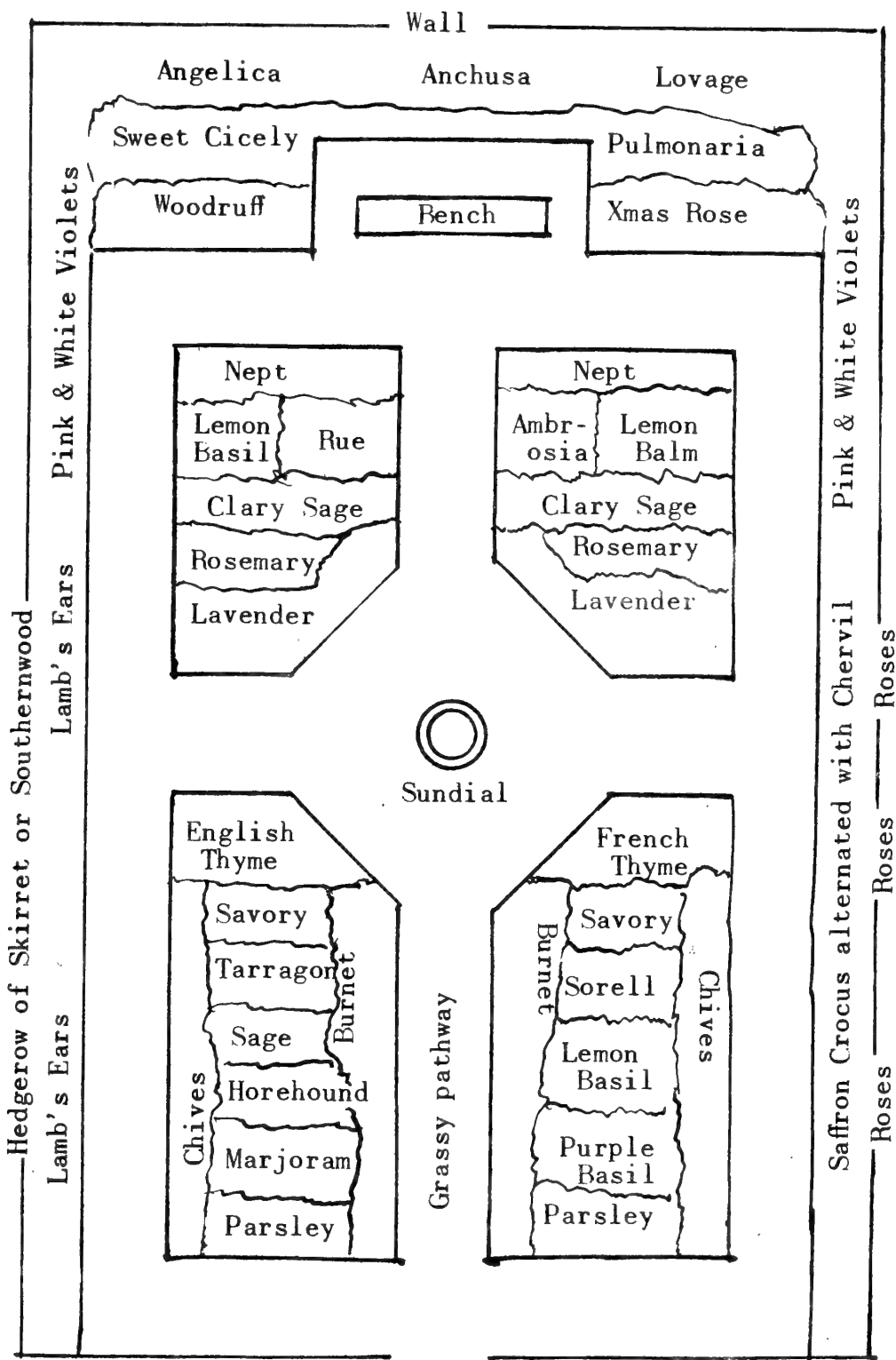
If the garden space is entirely exposed to the sun, some provision must be made for the shade-loving Angelica, Sweet Cicely, Chervil and Sweet Woodruff. They may endure some sun if the

Making the Herb Garden

It is well to have an alternate plan for the placement of the herbs in the years to come. If the ultimate goal is a formal garden such as the knot garden of Elizabethan days, it will be necessary to purchase or propagate a number of perennials such as gray and green Santolina, Artemisias and Thymes to delineate the intricate patterns. While working toward the goal, a very satisfactory herb garden can be produced in one season from seed.

Annuals and perennials, with the exception of Borage and members of the Parsley family such as Anise, Coriander, Dill, Chervil and Parsley, may be sown in flats in a coldframe or greenhouse any time after the first of March in the north and earlier in the south. They should be transplanted once before setting out to stimulate root growth. Many veteran gardeners find it is just as satisfactory to wait until seed can be planted out in the garden. The sturdier seedlings, grown in this way, need be transplanted or thinned but once. They seem to catch up to hothouse plants before the end of the summer. Follow the directions on the seed packet for time to plant and distance to allow between mature plants.

Do not *bury* small seeds. Plant to a depth of at least twice but not more than four times the diameter of the seed. Thin or transplant seedlings to stand at least six to ten inches apart. Mature perennials, such as Hyssop and Sage, will need two two feet between plants the second year.



Making the Herb Garden

and Rue may serve as a temporary hedge. Later it may be feasible to plant flowering shrubs, evergreens or climbing roses as a fitting enclosure for imprisoning the perfumed air created by the plants.

The selection of the herb varieties will depend, in part, upon the role which they are to play in the household as well as in the garden scene. There may be a theme or motif for each bed. Certain beds might be set aside for the seasonings for the kitchen.



The garden at Salt Acres. Beds are outlined with curved iron bands.

A Few Notes about Laurel Hill Seeds

For over ten years, we have specialized in the growing of the *best in herb seed*. You can be sure that seeds grown under controlled conditions and carefully tested, will give the best results as proved by the thousands of unsolicited letters which come in each year to us. We sell only seeds which we are sure are true to name and will grow with reasonable care in planting. Those varieties which require special handling are not listed here.

Seeds are allowed to ripen fully before harvesting. Then carefully removed from the seed-heads, often laboriously by hand where mechanical means would injure the seed coat, then cleaned in the most modern equipment to separate the viable from the imperfect seed. Carefully given the necessary after-ripening period before packaging and shipping to you.

We have not increased prices of most seeds for ten years. Many varieties are lower than in previous seasons since we pass on savings in more economical production to our customers. Many varieties can be purchased in bulk for large-scale planting. Write us your requirements for prices.

The Fosters

Laurel Hill Herb Farm, Falls Village, Conn.

Order promptly and avoid disappointments
Supplies of many varieties are strictly limited

Please Note Before Ordering

All seeds are sent prepaid by Seed Post, usually within 24 hours of receipt of order. However, since this class of mail may take up to two weeks enroute, allow time for delivery. If you should wish faster transportation, include 3% extra for first class or 5% for air dispatch.

Send remittance in full with order, by cash, check or money order. Stamps will be accepted for small purchases up to \$1.00. We prefer *not* to send C.O.D., since you would be charged extra for postage and collection.

We have endeavored to grow and ship only the very best seed. Each variety is carefully tested before shipment. However, as is common with all seedsmen, since we have no control over the method of planting by our customers nor over weather conditions during the growing season, we are responsible only to the extent of the purchase price of the seed.

At present, we do *NOT SELL PLANTS* except occasionally to visitors at the farm. If you should plan to visit us, kindly drop us a card beforehand so that we can give directions and set aside time for your visit.

Copies of *Herb Grower's Handbook* are available priced at .25¢ each or six for \$1.00

Order from: *The Fosters*

Falls Village,

Conn.

Laurel Hill Herb Farm
Falls Village, Conn.

Please send the following order to:

Name _____

Street _____

City _____ Zone _____

State _____

Ambrosia	. 15		Hyssop, White	. 25
Angelica	. 25		Hyssop, Mixed	. 15
Anise	. 15		Lamb's Ears	. 25
Balm, Lemon	. 15		Lavender, English	. 25
Basil, Sweet	. 10		Leek	. 10
Basil, Bush	. 25		Lovage	. 25
Basil, Purple	. 25		Marjoram, Sweet	. 15
Basil, Lemon	. 20		Nept	. 25
Basil, Mixed	. 15		Parsley, Curly	. 10
Borage	. 15		Parsley, Flat	. 10
Burnet, Salad	. 15		Pennyroyal, Amer.	. 25
Caraway	. 10		Perilla	. 15
Catnip	. 15		Rosemary	. 25
Chervil	. 15		Rue	. 25
Chives	. 15		Safflower	. 15
Coriander	. 10		Sage	. 10
Corn Salad	. 15		Sage, Clary	. 25
Cress, Garden	. 15		Savory, Summer	. 10
Dill	. 10		Sesame	. 20
Fennel	. 10		Skirret	. 20
Fenugrek	. 15		Sorrel, French	. 15
Horehound	. 15		Thyme, English	. 15
Hyssop, Blue	. 15		Woad, Golden	. 20
Hyssop, Pink	. 25		Wormwood, Sweet	. 25

total enclosed _____

cut or tear on this line

A Garden of Herbs the Year Around

All the charm and fragrance of a garden of herbs brought to you in each 24 page issue without advertising. *The Herb Grower* is the **only** garden magazine devoted to the culture, uses and legends of Herbs.

Garden plans and photographs of the plants themselves give visual proof of the pleasure to be gained from growing your own herbs.

Original, tested recipes aid you in bringing the savory harvest to the kitchen and table. Articles by experts in every phase of this increasingly popular field of horticulture, give full details on culture of and ways to use aromatic plants for better flavor in your food and more beauty in house and garden.

A technical editor and research bio-chemist reports the latest advances in science, nutrition and industry which make use of herbs.

Through the *Collectors Corner*, you may exchange surplus cuttings or bulbs for rarities you have been seeking.

In addition to these big features, the editors themselves, offer the following **free services** with each subscription:

Advise on garden plans and plant selections

Identification of plants whenever possible

Assistance with garden club programs

Information on plant and seed sources

Personal answers to all letters and inquiries

The Herb Grower Magazine

Monthly - \$2.50 year

Falls Village, Conn.

Making the Herb Garden

The collector of rose jars and potpourri recipes would reserve several plots for fragrant plants. Physicians and students of pharmacology often enjoy assembling the important drug plants in their herb gardens. The following proposed garden plan is a composite of all these types with the choice of material guided by standards of beauty as well as of usefulness. Full consideration must be given to the individual requirements of each plant as well as the pattern to which it must conform. There is no more unattractive sight than as unhappy plant languishing in too much shade or one shriveled by unwelcome exposure to sun and wind.

Starting Plants

The greater part of the plant material for the herb garden can be grown from seed sown in the spring. For reasons of economy, as well as for the experience of watching the plants unfold leaf by leaf from the seedling stage, starting with seed wherever possible, is most advisable. When the garden is well under way the first summer is time enough to purchase roots of clones such as French Tarragon or plants for which no seed is available such as Sweet Woodruff and Germander. These may be placed in a nursery bed for propagation the first season. By taking cuttings and layerings a few purchased plants may provide enough offshoots to border a bed or carpet a flagstone terrace another year.

Making the Herb Garden

roots are kept cool with a mulch of grass clippings or peat moss through the hot weather. Rose bushes, fruiting shrubs or small trees may be set out to shade these special plants. Perhaps a separate bed can be made for them on the north side of the house where shadows predominate.

It is more difficult to accomodate the sun-loving herbs in a sunless garden than to simulate shady areas in the open. If no spot under the sun can be found for the half dozen or more indispensable seasoning plants, they might be grown in strawberry barrels, pots or window boxes on a bright terrace or porch. But in planning the herb garden, we are not considering such make-shifts because, happily, most gardeners have at least a small space which is well suited to making the herb garden.

The first year, there is not too much to do to prepare the soil for planting herbs. The beds should be deeply spaded and all the clods broken up by raking. *Do not dig in any manure or fertilizer!* Few situations have too poor earth to support an herb garden. Any enrichment of ordinary loam will encourage an excess of foliage with a resulting loss of flavor in the leaves and seeds. In the following year, it may be necessary to divide and shift the hardy perennials with spreading root stocks. This will keep them from exhausting the soil in any one bed. Chives and Leeks to be used for cooking, should be grown in the

Making the Herb Garden

vegetable garden where they may benefit by occasional side dressing of fertilizer. Try to keep manure out of the herb garden. It is likely to harbor a fungus which causes rust on the Mints. When this happens, there seems to be no cure but to burn the old plants and start new roots in an uninfected bed.

Well-rotted compost and garden lime are the only growth stimulants needed for the established herb garden. The former should be dug into the parts of the beds occupied by transplanted perennials and annuals in early spring. Lavender and Rosemary, particularly, benefit by the addition of lime to the soil around their roots but not close enough to burn them.

Design and Motif

Every garden needs definition. In choosing a design, it may be possible to make use of some existing wall or hedge to serve as a portion of the frame for the planting. Often an old foundation wall of a former outbuilding will prove a suggestion for a sunken garden. Such a layout has many advantages for herbs because it is a pleasing sight to look down upon the patterns made by grey and green foliage plants and the banks of the sides provide shelter for the tender varieties.

Where no permanent perimeter of lasting beauty can be constructed before the garden is made, some of the shrubby perennials like Hyssop

Making the Herb Garden

In Sun and Semi-shade

The garden pictured in the accompanying plan lies in part sun and part shade. It faces to the south of the house. Tall trees to the rear of the stone wall and rustic bench cast enough broken shade to protect the tall Angelica and Lovage plants against the wall. Sweet Cicely and Pulmonaria planted alternately behind the low edging of Sweet Woodruff and Christmas Rose present a pleasing succession of color early in the spring. The slowly unfurling leaves of Sweet Cicely are but rosy knobs above the ground when the blue and pink ragged sailor blossoms of Pulmonaria are unfurled to the breeze. Later, the tall lacy white umbels of Sweet Cicely blossoms surrounded by lush layers of fern-like leaves almost hide the spotted leaves which give the name Lungwort to the plant which was thereby believed to be a cure for consumption.

If it is not desirable to set out enough Sweet Cicely plants the first season for the deep bed in front of the Lovage and Angelica, a variety of Mints might occupy the space. Spearmint for Mint sauce; Peppermint for tea; Orange Mint, *Mentha citrata*, and Pineapplement, *M. rotundifolia* var. *variegata*, used interchangeably for garnishing and beverages; would thrive in such a situation.

The rapidly spreading carpenter *Ajuga reptans* or the white-streaked *Lamium maculatum*, Dead Nettle, are good alternatives to the choice and costly Woodruff and *Helleborus niger*.



Seed Herbs

Anise - *Pimpinella anisum* (Parsley)

Slim, unbranching annual with umbels of delicate white flowers followed by aromatic grey seeds. Sow in warm earth where plants are to remain. Hill up when a few inches high to support weak stems. Collect seeds when they can be rubbed from the ripe heads. 8 in. Sun.

Caraway - *Carum carvi* (Parsley)

Glossy, carrot-like leaves the first season, followed by biennial white flowers and fruits the second spring. Seeds can be sown in fall for midsummer crop. Likes heavy clay soil. Sow where plants are to remain. Tolerates shade.

Coriander - *Coriandrum sativum* (Parsley)

Rapidly maturing annual with finely-dissected leaves, lacy umbels of pale pink blossoms, six weeks after sowing where plants are to remain. Ripe seeds have spicy flavor, very different from the odor of the green foliage. Cut, when first round seeds are ripe enough to pull off heads. Dry thoroughly before storing. Twin kernels inside round fruits are parts used for flavoring. Sun.

Fenugreek - *Trigonella Foenum-graecum* (Pea)

Unattractive annual, pea-like foliage and pinkish flowers on stems 2 ft. in height. Sow early in good soil, full sun. Grows best in cool weather, goes to seed quickly, producing many thin, narrow pods of small brownish seeds. Used by health food addicts for various reasons. The foliage is added to hay to make it palatable to cattle. Seeds are sprouted and eaten like soy bean sprouts in the near East.

Safflower - *Carthamus tinctorius* (Compositae)

Glossy, spiny leaves, orange-yellow, thistle-like flowers 3 ft. high. Plant large white seeds deeper than other herbs to support top-heavy plants. Collect flower petals as soon as they appear, dry on brown paper in shade, use like Saffron. Grows in poor soil in full sun. Grown commercially for extraction of oil. Not a pretty garden plant.

Sesame - *Sesamum indicum* (Pedalium)

Exotic annual which can be grown in hot weather in the north though it is a native of the tropics. Sow seeds after ground is warm in full sun. Thin but do not transplant. Large, three-parted or oblong leaves, slightly hairy, four grooved stems 3 ft. in height. Pinkish, foxglove-like flowers followed by furry seed capsules which 'Open Sesame'. Cut ripe stalks before they open the pods and dry in paper bag. Seeds have a delicate nut-like flavor when baked in cookies.



Fragrant and Decorative Herbs

Ambrosia - *Chenopodium botrys* (Goosefoot)

Called Jerusalem Oak because of the shape of the leaves which are reddish brown in seedling stage, like Oak leaves. Sow fine seeds on top of the ground as soon as possible in spring. Can be transplanted as big enough to handle. Allow six inches between plants. The glandular and somewhat hairy foliage is full of aromatic essential oils which gives leaves and greenish plumes of tiny blossoms the characteristic perfume. Very pleasing in flower arrangements where Ambrosia helps to keep the water sweet. Self-sows readily but is not weedy, Full sun or part shade, 2 ft., easy annual.

Catnip - *Nepeta cataria***(Mint)**

Soft, greyish, heart-shaped leaves, heavily veined and wrinkled, of this hardy perennial, 3 ft. herb are very fragrant. The flowers are borne in pink to purplish spires sometimes 5 inches long, in August. Sow seeds in spring or fall. Transplants best when plants are still seedlings. Can be set a foot apart in part shade or full sun in ordinary soil. Needs very little cultivation and becomes naturalized readily if allowed to self-sow. Leaves used as a tea; when dried, intoxicating to cats.

Horehound - *Marrubium vulgare***(Mint)**

One of the prettiest grey herbs when well grown, Horehound is a hardy perennial for a hot dry situation. Foliage loses its hoary look in wet weather and plants rot if not well-drained. Sow seed in spring or fall, leave at least 2 ft. between maturing plants. Foliage has acrid scent and bitter taste which is modified only by using as a flavoring for Horehound candy. Whorls of white flowers on trailing stems in July, not over 18 in. tall. Good cutting foliage and flowers.

Hyssop - *Hyssopus officinalis***(Mint)**

Long-lasting blue, pink or white flowers on 2 ft. high plants in constant succession of bloom from July until November. Leaves are glossy, linear to oblong, dense and easily shaped to make a neat hedge. Clean, antiseptic odor believed to discourage most insects from the garden bordered with Hyssop. Excellent bee plant because of its long period of bloom. Evergreen, hardy perennial, tolerant of shade, undemanding of soil and cultivation.

Lamb's Ears - *Stachys lanata*

(Mint)

Perennial Lamb's Ears makes a low spreading mat-like growth of frosty-looking, woolly leaves which are tongue-shaped. Leaves and flannelly flower stalks, 18 in. tall with small mauve blossoms in whorls, make interesting accents for flower arrangements. The name Woolly Betony points out its place in the genus of old medicinal herbs known as Woundworts. Does well in dry soil, full sun. Easy to grow from seed or root divisions.

Lavender - *Lavandula vera*

(Mint)

Lovely, shrubby, grey-leaved, woody perennial, 2 ft. tall with sweet, clean scent. The long-stemmed leafless flower spikes are true Lavender hue with strongest aroma before the buds are fully open. This is the time they are cut for drying. Slow-growing, evergreen Lavender likes a sunny location, sheltered from the wind in limey soil. Seeds need long, cool germination period and must be fresh. Takes three seasons to reach maturity from seed. Fall planting just before the ground freezes, seems to produce the best germination in the garden. Can be sown in flats in a sterile medium such as sphagnum moss, sand or vermiculite and kept shaded and moist until seeds sprout in four to six weeks. Transplant as soon as seedlings have four true leaves, to smallest size pot. Difficult for the beginner but well worth the trouble to get it started.

Nept - *Nepeta mussini*

(Mint)

Low-growing, blue-flowered herb of Catnip-like scent and nature. Much used as an edging for shade or sun. Blue blossoms in long, lax racemes in May and September if seed heads are cut off. Small, grey, rounded leaves of soft texture and pleasant aroma. Thrives in gravelly soil once started from seed, can be divided by separating the runners next season. Sow in moist soil, transplant to stand one foot apart. Hardy perennial 18 in.

Perilla - *Perilla frutescens crispa* (Mint)

Tall, 3 ft. annual with deep purple, much-crisped foliage and glistening hairy spikes of pinkish flowers. Three-to-four-inch-wide leaves are toothed on the margin and curly. Curious scent, not at all sweet, from leaves and flowers but they are much used in formal flower arrangements and in annual beds for accent. Inter-planted with tall Wormwoods, Perilla provides a handsome contrast. Sow seeds after the ground is warm, covering them lightly. Allow three to four weeks for germination. Can be transplanted in seedling stage to stand 1 ft. apart. Tender foliage is nipped by first frost but plants often self-sow to come up another year.

Rue - *Ruta graveolens* (Rue)

Oddly-patterned, almost evergreen, blue-green foliage. Has a medicinal pungence once believed anti-septic and discouraging to insects. Yellow-flowered, 2½ ft. tall, shrubby, hardy perennial, rich in many legendary associations. Sow seeds in early spring, transplant to 12 in. apart first year. Likes alkaline soil, full sun. Handling the foliage in hot weather may cause skin rashes in some cases.

Clary Sage - *Salvia sclarea* (Mint)

One of the most striking biennials in flower from July to September. Large, rugose, leaves topped by 4 ft. tall spikes of shining, hairy flowering stems and showy blue and white two-lipped flowers. The penetrating perfume increases as the blossoms set seed. Dried heads may be used in potpourri and sachets as a fixative for other scents. Sow each year for a succession of bloom. Needs full sun, well-drained soil, not too rich. Allow two feet between plants. Easy to start from seeds sown in spring or fall.

Woad - *Isatis tinctoria* (Mustard)

Bright yellow panicles of Woad blossoms bring the glint of summer sun to the garden in May. Blue-green leaves were once an important source of blue dye. A tall biennial reaching 4 ft. in height in good soil, in full sun. Sow each year in spring or fall. Self-sows freely but volunteers may be moved while young to desired positions.

Sweet Wormwood - *Artemisia annua* (Compositae)

Annual Wormwood of very sweet scent in lacy, green foliage and 5 ft. tall panicles of small greenish yellow flower heads. Sow as early as ground can be worked. Thin to stand 1 ft. apart. Grows in full sun and ordinary soil, self-sows readily. Leaves and seed heads retain their fragrance for a long time when dried and can be used in sachets and sweet bags. Feathery much-cut leaves soften bouquets.

There are many other fragrant plants which belong in the established herb garden. Lemon Verbena, Scented Geraniums, Germander, Santolinas, Creeping Thymes and Sweet Woodruff, to name a few, have not been included here because they are not easily grown from seed or do not set reliable seed. It is hoped that the beginner will be inspired by success with the easy-to-grow varieties described here to go on and try new species each year.



How To Use Herbs

While leaf herbs are at their best freshly gathered from the garden, seeds used for pickling and baking must be dried before using. After the ripe seeds are easily pulled from the heads, wash them and spread them on a tray or screen in the sun to dry. Drying may be done in a cool oven but it is well to leave them open to the air for several days before storing in air-tight containers. Large stems are removed by passing the seeds through a series of coarse strainers or sieves. Anise, Caraway, Dill, Fennel and Sesame are sprinkled whole on cookies and rolls before baking. Coriander must be crushed and ground fine to extract the flavor from the nut-like kernels inside the shell. The other seeds may be ground also for mixing in batters and doughs.

Leaf herbs produce the greatest amount of volatile flavor-bearing oils just before the plants flower. The optimum time to cut the foliage for drying, is on a clear day, after the dew has dried off the plants but before the sun has dissipated the oils. However it is possible to use the annuals fresh all summer and then pull them up, cut close to the roots and hang the whole plants in an airy place out of the sun to dry. Sage and Thyme should not be cut too late as they need their tops to go through the winter. Frequent clipping of leafy tips can be made at intervals during the summer. The herbs are spread on screens to dry, stirring daily. In one to two weeks they should be crisp enough to crumble and store. Finishing off in a cool oven is permissible here too. Use only one quarter as much dried herbs as fresh, as when dried they are much concentrated.



